

Aldine Square  
Cook County  
Chicago, Illinois

HABS No. Ill.-153 ✓

HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
5-

*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. Ill.1.

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Earl H. Reed, District Officer  
435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago

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ALDINE SQUARE  
Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

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ILL,  
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5-

Owner - The United States Government owns 80% of this property and the remaining 20% is in process of purchase by the United States.

Date of Erection - 1873 and 1874

Present Condition - These buildings have been in a dilapidated and unsanitary state for some years and the Federal Emergency Public Works Administration has started demolition, preparing the site for a Low-cost Housing Unit, for which plans and specifications are ready.

Number of Stories - two and three.

Materials of Construction - Red and grey cut stone fronts; side walls, rear walls and party walls of brick; flat roofs; stone foundations. The fronts are heavily ornamented with stone carving and iron work. The interior contains massive walnut trim.

Additional Data - Aldine Square was erected between 37th and 39th Streets on Vincennes Avenue in Chicago in 1873 and 1874 by Uzziel P. Smith.

There are forty-two homes surrounding a park, the total area of which is approximately two and one half acres. The houses face the park on three sides and present a U shaped plan of two and three story town houses separated by party walls.

It might be said that the style of architecture is of the decadent French character popular in Chicago in the 1870's. Rich ornament in stone and metal was applied to red and grey stone fronts. The houses were considered as a group and therefore present a certain continuity of design. An attempt at symmetry about the East-West axis is evident.

The purpose of the square, the people that occupied the homes, and their social relationships, are matters of outstanding interest. A reunion a few years ago of some of the original occupants and their descendants, exemplifies the spirit in which these people lived.

There was a common stable with push button communication to each home, a gardener that serviced all the gardens and lawns and in general a spirit of self-contained sociability, that prevailed up to the time of the world war. At this time, the negro population closed in on the square and its rapid decline followed.

The builder and founder of the Square, Mr. U. P. Smith, came from a Massachusetts farm shortly after the Civil War. He had been trained in law at the state college at Middlebury, Vermont. Coming west, he first took a position teaching school and then went into the practice of law. This work was supplemented with promotional and building activity. He erected and built many residences on the south side of the city.

The many residents of earlier days were socially prominent as well as industrially and professionally. Such centers as this were very popular in their day, though the spirit in which they were organized and built has long since passed away.

By act of The Chicago City Council early in 1936, the name was changed to De Sable Square, named after Chicago's early trader, Jean Baptisto Saint de Sable, a negro.

The original name "Aldine" is said to have been derived from that of the famous old Venetian Press of the 16th century which published the first editions of Greek and Roman Classics. An anchor entwined by a dolphin - the device of the press, appears carved in the stone pylons at the entrance of the Square.

Sources - Mr. G. B. Smith                      Mr. Robert Rice  
                 Mrs. T. J. Morse of Chicago, and Mrs. Ben  
                 Q. Tufts of Winnetka. Mr. John Drury of  
                 the Chicago Daily News.

By

*Robert Q. Tufts*

Approved

*Earl Morse*

*BU*

*6/15/37*